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202-606-8339

Eileen Maxwell: emaxwell@imls.gov
Mamie Bittner: mbittner@imls.gov

**Institute of Museum and Library Services Awards \$889,652
to Support Library Service in Montana**

Washington, DC—Dr. Robert Martin, Director of the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), announced grants totaling \$157,628,000 to state library agencies in the fifty States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories. "Libraries are essential to our democracy," said Director Martin. "They promote community prosperity and individual productivity. The grants we make today will help libraries throughout the country meet the needs of youth, parents, the unemployed, senior citizens, and local businesses."

The grants are awarded under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and are made to each State according to a population-based formula; the State's library agency administers the funds. States provide at least \$1.00 for every \$2.00 of federal support.

IMLS Library Services and Technology Act funds help state library agencies make library resources and services, which can be prohibitively expensive to the individual, readily available to an entire community. Highlights of how the Montana State Library uses these funds to benefit the residents of Montana include:

- Montana Shared Catalog (MSC) Project: An LSTA grant enabled seventeen libraries in western Montana, ranging from the small, unautomated public library in Thompson Falls to the Montana State Law Library, to come together to form an online system that allows users to place holds, renew their materials, communicate with library staff, and more. When a resident of Dillon wanted account information, but the city library was closed, reference staff at Missoula Public Library used MSC to access her account, and the patron was thrilled.

- Gallatin County Shared Catalog Project: The BridgerNet Consortium incorporates four library systems near the Bozeman, Montana Public Library. LSTA funds were used to purchase licenses, barcodes, scanners, and other equipment so that all of the libraries could participate in the shared catalog. Working together to build the shared catalog created opportunities for other shared projects, including a courier service. Patrons, especially seniors and the homebound, are enthusiastic about the greater access to resources they now have.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners. The Institute fosters leadership, innovation, and a lifetime of learning by supporting the nation's 15,000 museums and 122,000 libraries. The Institute also encourages partnerships to expand the educational benefit of libraries and museums. To learn more about the Institute, please log onto: <http://www.imls.gov>.